

## 182 SIMILE ZOLA,. NOVELIST AND REFORMER

It has been urged, however, that directly money came to Zola, instead of yielding to a desire for comfort, he ought to have devoted himself to travel and study, and particularly have restrained his literary output. He would have derived benefit from foreign travel undoubtedly, but his self-set task of the Rougon-Macquart series long riveted him to France. As for study, he was always studying, books as well as men, and Mr. George Moore's suggestion that he had little acquaintance with the heart of French literature<sup>1</sup> was erroneous, for abundant proof of the contrary will be found in the eight volumes of his collected essays and articles. These also show that he kept abreast of the literature of his time, and all his friends are aware that new books and literary periodicals, to say nothing of a profusion of newspapers, encompassed him during the last twenty years of his life. But, in a large degree, he certainly set the literature of the past behind him, regarding it as being chiefly of historical value. And whether he were right or wrong in that matter, it must be obvious that his attitude was in keeping with his character as an evolutionist. In a word, he was more concerned respecting the future of literature than respecting its antecedents.

But it has been said that a change began to appear in Zola about the time of "L'Assommoir," and the change we more particularly mean is that by which the novelist expanded into a reformer. As scores of his newspaper articles, collected and uncollected, testify, the injustice of the social system had always been manifest to him. "With the degradation of many individual lives he was well acquainted. His own rise to affluence made him yet more

<sup>1</sup> " English Illustrated Magazine," Z. c.